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The Right of Privacy

Justice Brandeis called the right of privacy the "right most valued by civilized men." It is the first right denied by any totalitarian system. It is associated in the minds of most Americans with the right to be free of unlawful searches and forced self-incrimination. It is a hallmark of a free society.

I believe we should protect the right against invasion by wiretapping and electronic devices . . .

A new Federal law banning wiretapping and electronic bugging and snooping is essential.

I recommend that the Congress enact the Right of Privacy Act of 1967.

Within the full reach of the constitutional powers possessed by the Federal government this law would:

- Outlaw all wiretapping, public and private, wherever and whenever it occurs, as well as all willful invasions of privacy by electronic devices such as radio transmitters and concealed microphones. The only exceptions would cover those instances where the security of the Nation itself is at stake — and then only under the strictest safeguards.

- Prohibit the advertisement, manufacture or distribution in interstate commerce of wiretapping and eavesdropping devices.

The above clipping is an
excerpt from the President's
Message to Congress on
Crime in America.